

ART NEWS

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Art news from

Chicago by A. James Speyer

The Myrtle Todes Gallery of Hubbard Woods, another Chicago suburb, has just closed an exhibition of the Italian, Guido La Regina. This painter was born in Naples in 1909 and has lived and painted in Italy most of his life, at present in Rome. His early work was a kind of simplified naturalism, leading ultimately to a form of abstraction more charming, perhaps, than deep, and skillfully designed. The display here included only La Regina's most recent work, a series of elegantly proportioned, vertical canvases of beguiling surface and color. The surface is built up in flecks, tiny to large, of sharp geometric form: thin precise

strokes, flash, spot, over many, many other thinnesses of the same, and always different, forms. There is a kind of space suggested by the overlay technique, but it is more the space of an intricate Japanese rice paper (with butterflies and flowers and shreds of fabric) than painterly space as we usually think of it. This might be caused by the scale of the artist's forms, or by the silkiness of his colors. There is a brilliant, shimmering action, but one wonders how much intensity of feeling.

It is difficult to have looked at this work in a gallery which emphasizes furniture and fashionable accessories and fits painting between home furnishings. The paintings were superior to the competitive paraphernalia, and yet they were disturbingly too comfortable there.